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which must have ill assorted with the state of bodily suffering to which he was almost daily and hourly condemned. It is written to Schott, the music publisher in Mayence, and is dated from Baden, whither he had gone in the hope of obtaining some mitigation of his disease :

The Quartett (Op. 127, in E flat major) you shall also certainly receive by the middle of October. Overburdened by work, and suffering from bad health, I really have some claim on the indulgence of others. I am here entirely owing to my health, or rather to the want of it, although I already feel better. Apollo and the Muses do not yet intend me to become the prey of the bony Seytheman, as I have yet much to do for you, and much to bequeath which my spirit dictates, and calls on me to complete before I depart hence for the Elysian fields; for I feel as if I had written scarcely more than a few notes of music. I wish your efforts all possible success in the service of art; it is that and science alone which point the way, and lead us to hope for a higher life. I will write again soon.

It is well known that Beethoven undertook the guardianship of his nephew, Carl, at the death of his brother; and it is much to be feared that the efforts he used to separate him from his disreputable mother, and the bad conduct of the young man himself, contributed materially to hasten his death. The letters relating to this episode in his life will be read with the utmost interest, and will do much to place before the world the noble and unselfish character of a man whose moroseness has been hitherto so prominently dwelt upon as to make many believe that he was an artistic savage. Let any who still preserve that feeling read these few extracts from letters to his nephew :—

Continue to love me, my dear boy; if I ever cause you pain, it is not from a wish to grieve you, but for your eventual benefit. I now conclude, I embrace you cordially. All I wish is that you should be loving, industrious, and upright.

Now farewell, my darling! deserve this name. Retain what money you require; anything you want shall be purchased for you when I come in. I embrace you, and hope you will be my good studious, noble son.

And again, after the positive knowledge of his nephew's misdoings, comes this kind and forgiving letter, with not even one word written in anger or reproach :

My dear Son,—Say no more! only come to my arms; not one harsh word shall you hear. For God's sake do not bring misery on your own head. You shall be received as lovingly as ever. We can discuss in a friendly manner what is to be done and settled as to the future. I pledge my word of honour you shall meet with no reproaches from me, which, indeed, could no longer avail. You need expect only the most affectionate care and assistance from me. Only come! Come to the faithful heart of—

Your father, BEETHOVEN.

Well indeed may this benevolent guardian say that he does not “dread appearing before the Highest of all judges,” for, with a precarious income and failing health, he had for years voluntarily fulfilled the duties of a fond and affectionate father towards a man who returned his kindness by disobedience and contempt.

When Beethoven, in his latter days, was seized with dropsy, which, added to his other ailments, prevented the possibility of any active mental exertion, he applied to the Philharmonic Society of London, through Moscheles and Sir George Smart, to aid him by organising a concert in his behalf. To the credit of the Society (which even had it no other claim upon our gratitude, must live for ever in the memory of all who love art and artists, for this one act) they generously sent a hundred pounds at once to the suffering composer, whose last written words were poured out in gratitude for this expression of English sympathy with his misfortunes. In spite of the conduct of his nephew, Beethoven appointed him his sole heir, and positively refused to take any precautionary measures which might prevent his taking possession of the whole of his property on his decease. The

day after making this will, he lost consciousness, and on the evening of the 26th March, 1827, expired, after a painful struggle; and, as we are informed, amidst a violent storm of thunder and lightning.

The works of a genius so exceptional as Beethoven, speak for themselves, and time only more deeply stamps them upon the sympathies of each succeeding generation; but few who admire his artistic power can resist the temptation to know the man as he lived—as he thought and acted in the conventional routine of every day life; and as no mere biography, however minute, can satisfy this desire so perfectly as a series of letters indited with his own hand, and instinct with the thought and feeling of the moment at which they are written, we cordially welcome these two volumes as a valuable addition to the fast accumulating store of artistic literature.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

THAT Gluck's masterpiece, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, should have been produced for the first time on the Italian stage in England on the 8th ult., can only cause surprise to those whose refined appreciation of the highest works in art has rendered them forgetful of the fact that they are in that small minority of enthusiasts of whom little notice can be taken by those who live by appealing to the taste of the public at large. Operas relying upon mere vocal display, or largely depending upon scenic accessories, have so many charms for the general listener that it is easy to perceive how the chaste and truthful music of Gluck should be looked upon as a curiosity, and only produced now and then, to the delight of the few and the passive endurance of the many. Such works, however, have little chance of permanently decaying; and their periodical appearance should, at least, teach people to think whether in ignoring the pure and noble creations of such an exceptional genius as Gluck, they are not gradually deteriorating the standard of musical taste, and fostering that unreal and spasmodic school of writing which has destroyed the poetical element in the Drama, and substituted a love for sensational effects and maudlin sentiment.

Iphigenia in Tauris is the finest specimen of a style which created a revolution in operatic music, and caused, as is well known, a feud between the lovers of Italian and German music almost unprecedented in artistic annals. *Alceste* and *Orfeo*, both originally produced at Vienna, were merely adapted to the French stage, but *Iphigenia* was Gluck's first opera written for the French capital, and in its composition he has concentrated all his artistic power and ripened judgment.

The first performance of this work was one of the most perfect we have yet heard at Her Majesty's Theatre. To Madlle. Titiens we can only accord the most unqualified praise. Not only her singing, but her acting, and her noble and dignified bearing, were so thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of Gluck's music, that the classic colouring of the Opera was never for a moment interfered with. Her fine delivery of the many recitatives which form so important a feature in the work showed how earnestly she had studied the meaning of the composer, and raised her still higher in the estimation of all who prefer intellectual vocal declamation to showy and meretricious display. Mr. Santley's *Orestes* was, as might be expected from all this conscientious artist undertakes, an earnest and truthful realization of the part; and Signor Gardoni, as *Pylades*, struggled manfully against the effects of a recent illness which had evidently weakened his voice. Signor Gassier, too, was a very good representative of *Thoas*, although the music does not lie comfortably within his register. The choruses were extremely well sung, if we except the want of an occasional *piano*, so essential, especially to the beautiful hymn for female voices; and the orchestra, under the skillful directorship of Signor Ardit, left nothing to be desired. Whether this Opera prove attractive or not, so thoroughly satisfactory a performance deserves to be placed on record as an artistic fact; and the thanks of all lovers of real art are due to the management for placing so intellectual a work before its subscribers and the public.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

THE appearance of Madame Maria Vilda in the character of *Norma*, has been the event at this establishment during the last month. After the impression left upon those who recollect Grisi in her best day, it is a triumph for a new singer, and almost a complete novice to the stage, to create so extraordinary an effect in a character intimately associated with the favourite *prima donna* who has now, we believe we may say, definitely retired from public life. Madame Vilda has a voice admirably fitted for the interpretation of dramatic music; and she sings with an expression and earnestness which seems innate, rather than the result of deep study. Mr. Gye may fairly congratulate himself upon the acquisition of an artist who is certain to establish herself as a permanent favourite with the critical audience of the Royal Italian Opera. Madame Lemmens-Sherrington has made a most successful appearance as *Adalgisa* to Madame Vilda's *Norma*, and Signor Brignoli does all that can be done for the thankless part of *Pollio*.